

Message Text

SECRET

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ACTION NEA-10

INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 ISO-00 SY-05 USSS-00 CA-01 A-01
OPR-02 OC-06 CCO-00 HA-05 OMB-01 TRSE-00 SES-02
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INR-10 NSAE-00 DODE-00 ICA-11 PA-01 /108 W
-----119869 171347Z /42

R 171155Z AUG 78
FM AMEMBASSY TEHRAN
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 9902
INFO AMEMBASSY ANKARA
USINT BAGHDAD
AMEMBASSY ISLAMABAD
AMEMBASSY LONDON

S E C R E T SECTION 1 OF 2 TEHRAN 7890

NOFORN

EO 11652: XGDS-4
TAGS: PORS, PINS, IR
SUBJ: INCREASE IN RELIGIOUS PRESSURE ON GOVERNMENT

REF: A. TEHRAN 7311, B. TEHRAN 7793

SUMMARY: RHETORIC AND CROWD ACTIVITY IN TEHRAN IS INCREASING SLIGHTLY. RELIGIOUS ELEMENTS APPEAR TO BE PLANNING SIGNIFICANT DEMONSTRATIONS FOR THREE-DAY MOURNING FOR DEATH OF IMAM ALI. SECRET TALKS BETWEEN GOI AND GOVERNMENT CONTINUE. RELIGIOUS LEADERS SEE CHANGE NECESSARY. END SUMMARY.

1. EYEWITNESS IRANIAN SOURCE TELLS US THERE HAS BEEN ALMOST CONTINUAL MINOR UPHEAVAL IN SOUTH TEHRAN FOR PAST SEVEN TO TEN DAYS. AYATOLLAHS AT MAJOR MOSQUES HAVE BECOME MORE ANTI-GOVERNMENT AND IN SOME CASES ANTI-FOREIGN AND DIRECTLY ANTI-AMERICAN. RESULT HAS BEEN SMALL GROUPS OF MEN IN THEIR TEENS OR TWENTIES HAVE BEEN ROAMING THE STREETS BREAKING WINDOWS.

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THE LOW LEVEL VIOLENCE THUS FAR HAS BEEN SPORADIC.

2. FIRST SERIOUS INDICATIONS THAT MOSQUE CROWDS MAY BE PREPARED FOR DEMONSTRATIONS FOLLOWING EARLY AFTERNOON PRAYER SESSIONS CAME AUG 15. LARGE CROWD LEAVING MOSQUE AT SHAHNAZ SQUARE REFUSED TO DISPERSE WITH USUAL ENCOURAGEMENT BY POLICE AND LED AUTHORITIES ON A BIT OF A CHASE UP

TO THE CORNER OF TAKTE JAMSHID AND OLD SHEMIRAN ROAD, SOME SIX BLOCKS FROM THE EMBASSY. GOI THAT DAY BEGAN PRECAUTIONARY STATIONING OF MILITARY UNITS AT KEY POINTS IN THE CITY. TO THE BEST OF OUR KNOWLEDGE, THERE HAS BEEN NO OUTBREAK OF SIGNIFICANT VIOLCNE, BUT POLICE REMAIN IN POSITION AROUND MOSQUES TO ENCOURAGE SUFFICIENT SWIFT DISPERSAL AFTER MAJOR PRAYER MEETING. ON AUG. 16, TEHRAN BAZAAR WAS CLOSED, BUT TROOPS WERE NEEDED TO BREAK UP CROWD EXITING FROM BAZAAR MOSQUE.

3. OUR SOURCES CLOSE TO THE RELIGIOUS COMMUNITY SAY THAT MORE DEMONSTRATIONS ARE PLANNED FOR THE AUG. 24 TO 26 PERIOD, THE VERY EMOTIONAL MOURNING OF THE DEATH OF IMAM ALI. ONE SOURCE TELLS US THAT SOME SOUTH TEHRAN MOSQUES ARE CIRCULATING SIGN-UP LISTS FOR A SIT IN TO BE HELD ON THE SHAHANSHAHI EXPRESSWAY AUG. 26. WE UNDERSTAND THE ARMENIAN MOSQUE NEAR THE BAZAAR HAS BEEN CLOSED FOR A WEEK.

4. POLITICAL BYPLAY AMOUNG RELIGIOUS LEADERS AND BETWEEN THEM AND THE GOVERNEMENT HAS INCREASED RAPIDLY OVER THE PAST FEW WEEKS. AYATOLLAH SHARITMADARI TOLD AGENCE FRANCE PRESS (AFP) THAT HIS PEOPLE WERE AGAINST COMMUNISM AND THAT THE SHAH HIMSELF SHOULD SPEAK WITH THE PEOPLE. SHARIATMADARI CRITICIZED THE GOVERNMENT'S HANDLING OF DEMONSTRATIONS IN SHIRAZ AND OPPOSED MARTIAL LAW IN ISFAHAN.
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HE STRONGLY OPPOSED VIOLENT ACTIVITIES ON BEHALF OF HIS FOLLOWERS BUT SAID THE GOVERNEMENT SHOULD OD MORE FOR THE PEOPLE. WE UNDERSTAND FROM ONE WELL PLACED SOURCE THAT COURT MINISTER HOVEYDA WAS VERY IRRITATED WITH THIS INTERVIEW, BUT WAS TOLD BY A SENIOR IRANIAN THAT "AFTER ALL, SHARIATMADARI IS NOT A MEMBER OF YOUR STAFF."

5. WITHIN PAST FEW DAYS AYATOLLAH KHOMEINI SENT SHARIATMADARI A MESSAGE TO STOP TALKING ABOUT A CONSTITUTION AND PARLIAMENT SINCE KHOMEINI OPPOSED THEM ALL. SOURCE WHO HAS BEEN INVOLVED IN GOVERNEMENT/RELIGIOUS DISCUSSIONS TELLS US SHARIATMADARI SENT KHOMEINI "PUT UP OR SHUT UP" MESSAGE TO THE EFFECT THAT IF KHOMEINI WAS SO STRONG, HE SHOULD COME TO TEHRAN AND SPEAK FACE TO FACE WITH THE AYATOLLAHS WHO LIVE IN IRAN. SHARIATMADARI NOTED KHOMEINI LIVED FAR AWAY FROM IRAN AND HAD REFUSED TO CRITICIZE THE IRAQI GOVERNEMENT WHEN IT TOOK SEVERE ACTION AGAINST DEMONSTRATORS IN NAJAF ABOUT TWO YEARS AGO. SHARIATMADARI HAS TOLD HIS ADVISORS THAT HE "DOES NOT WISH TO BE SHAH" BUT WANTS CONSTITUTIONAL LAW AND A PARLIAMENT. SUBSEQUENT TO THIS, KHOMEINI REPORTEDLY ISSUED A PROCLAMATION CALLING ON ARMY

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AND POLICE OFFICERS NOT TO FIRE ON THEIR BROTHERS AND GO
AGAINST THE GOVERNEMENT. ONE SOURCE REPLIED THIS IS THE
FIRST OCCASION IN SOME TIME THAT ONE OF HIS MESSAGES HAS
FALLEN ON DEAF EARS.

6. VERY SENSITIVE SOURCE RELAYED TO US THE SUBSTANCE OF
A MEETING BETWEEN SAVAK CHIEF MOGHADDAM AND SHARIATMADARI'S
SON-IN-LAW ABBASI NIGHT OF AUG. 15. MOGHADDAM REPORTEDLY
ASKED WHAT THE RELIGIOUS COMMUNITY WANTED AND ABBASI TICKED
OFF FOLLOWING POINTS: A) THERE MUST BE A NEW GOVERNMENT.
THE PRESENT CABINET IS UNRESPONSIVE TO THE PEOPLE AND IS
BLAMED FOR THE KILLING THAT HAS TAKEN PLACE SINCE JANUARY.
B) THE NEXT GOVERNMENT MUST AT A MINIMUM CALL TO ACCOUNT
SOME OF THE MAJOR INDIVIDUALS SUSPECTED OF CORRUPTION, SUCH
AS ALI REZA'I, MANSOUR YASSINI AND MAJOR INDUSTRIALISTS
LAJEVARDI AND FOULADI. C) THE ACTIVITIES OF PRINCESS ASHRAF
ARE ANATHEMA TO THE RELIGIOUS COMMUNITY. SHE MUST BE CURTAILED.
THE FINANCIAL ACTIVITIES OF AT LEAST TWO MEMBERS OF THE

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ROYAL FAMILY, GHOLAM REZA, AND MAHMOUD REZA MUST AT A MINIMUM BE REINED IN. ABBASSI TOLD MOGHADDAM CRITICALLY THAT MAHMOUD'S FRIEND MOZZAFARI JANDARI SHOULD BE FORCED OUT OF THE OPIUM GROWING BUSINESS. D) THE POEPL E MUST BE FREE TO TALK AND WORSHIP, SHARIATMADARI'S PEOPLE GREATLY APPROVED OF THE SHAT'S CONSTITUTION DAY SPEECH AND MOGHADDAM WAS TOLD TO TELL THE SHAH THIS. MOGHADDAM REPLIED HE WOULD BE SEEING THE SHAH THAT EVENING.

7. AS A RESULT OF THE ABOVE DISCUSSION, THREE MAJOR AYATOLLAHS, SHARIATMADARI, GOLPAYGAN AND MARIASHI, DECIDED TO ISSUE A BULLETIN WHICH, WHILE ANTI -GOVERNMENT IN TONE, WILL CALL FOR MOSLEMS TO STOP KILLING THEIR BROTHERS AND TO REFRAIN FROM PUBLIC DISORDER. WE UNDERSTAND FROM OUR BEST SOURCE THAT RELIGIOUS GROUPS AT SOME POINT HAVE DISCUSSED POSSIBLE PRIME MINISTERS TO REPLACE AMOUZEGAR. MODERATE RELIGIOUS LEADERSHIP BELIEVES SENIOR STATESMAN IS NECESSARY, SOMEBODY WITH CONFIDENCE OF BOTH SHAH AND PEOPLE. OUR SOURCE THOUGHT TWO NAMES HAD BEEN BANDIED ABOUT: ALI AMINI AND SENATE PRESIDENT SHARIF EMAMI. HE HIMSELF ADDED SHAH'S ADVISORS FARDUST AND MOINIAN. ACCORDING TO SOURCE, SHARIF EMEMAI WAS THOUGHT TO BE THE BEST CANDIDATE BECAUSE HE IS A VERY RELIGIOUS MAN HIMSELF AND HAS SOLID POLITICAL BACKING.

8. OUR RELIGIOUS SOURCES ARE ALL PESSIMISTIC THAT FURTHER VIOLENCE CAN BE AVOIDED UNLESS THERE ARE SOME CHANGES IN THE OFFING. RADICAL RELIGIOUS LEADERSHIP PLAYS ON EVERY INCIDENT TO WHIP UP MORE FEELING AND THE MOOD, PARTICULARLY IN TEHRAN, IS COMING TO AN ACCEPTANCE OF MORE DEMONSTRATIONS. NAAS

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